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*Published in:*  
Journal of Intercultural and Interdisciplinary Archaeology

*Publication date:*  
2014

*Document version*  
Early version, also known as pre-print

*Citation for published version (APA):*  
Vigo, M. (2014). The use of (perfumed) oil in Hittite rituals with particular emphasis on funerary practices: Consumption of perfumed oil in the ancient Mediterranean and Near East: funerary rituals and other case studies. *Journal of Intercultural and Interdisciplinary Archaeology*, 2014(1), 25-37. [2014/1].

# THE USE OF (PERFUMED) OIL IN HITTITE RITUALS WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON FUNERARY PRACTICES\*<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract:

According to the Hittite texts, Late Bronze Age Anatolia was known for the diversity of its agricultural products. Oil-bearing plants are listed among them. Hittite scholars distinguish 'oil', 'fat' and similar products on the basis of their attestations. Additionally, lexical analysis of Hittite terms or their equivalents - usually concealed behind logograms - helps philologists to identify oil products. The use of oil obtained from different plants is richly attested in different genres. In this respect, the description of ritual scenarios seems to be very productive. From procedures of the rituals we can infer that oil was used for several purposes. In this article attention is placed on the use of 'perfumed oil' in rituals with particular emphasis on funerary practices. In addition, selected possible comparisons with other funerary contexts are briefly presented.

**Keywords:** Late Bronze Age Anatolia; Hittite; Oil products; Perfumed oils; Ritual scenarios; Funerary ritual practices.

## 1. Previous Research

Research on food plants and their products has, from various perspectives, aroused wide interest in Hittitological studies since the seventies of the last century.

Harry A. Hoffner Jr. has schematically presented a rich variety of fruit trees utilized by the inhabitants of Anatolia in the Late Bronze Age. Among these, he listed apple, fig, tamarisk, pomegranate, date and olive trees (Hoffner 1974: 113-120). A few years earlier Hans G. Güterbock offered a systematic appraisal of oil and oil-bearing plants in Hittite Anatolia (Güterbock 1968). In his preliminary study Güterbock discussed four oil-producing plants in Hittite texts: Akkadian <sup>GIŠ</sup>*serdu(m)* (Hittite rendering <sup>GIŠ</sup>*SE<sub>20</sub>-ER-DUM*) = 'olive tree'; <sup>GIŠ</sup>*sam(m)am(m)a-* = 'a kind of nut', probably its tree;<sup>2</sup> Sumerian <sup>GIŠ</sup>*ŠE.GIŠ.Ì* (possible Hittite reading *sapsama-*)<sup>3</sup> = 'sesame-oil tree?'; <sup>GIŠ</sup>*liti-l lēti-* = 'perhaps the almond'.<sup>4</sup> In a brief paper Itamar Singer subsequently summarized the results achieved thus far, and also provided general hints on the alleged locations of olive tree groves in Kizzuwatna, classical Cilicia, on the basis of a cursory survey of the Hittite land grant deeds (Singer 1987, page 184 in particular). On the occasion of a tribute to one of the greatest excavators of the Hittite capital *Hattusa*, namely Peter Neve, Harry Hoffner presented the results of his lexical research, that were later published in the fascicle 'Š' of the Chicago Hittite Dictionary (Hoffner 1995). In this article Hoffner provided a comprehensive and detailed picture of the different kind of oils attested in the Hittite documentation. After presenting a general list of words (mostly Sumerograms) for 'oil'

\* I wish to thank my colleague, Peder Flemestad (CTR-University of Copenhagen), for his absolutely useful proofreading and for his always enlightening piece of advice.

Abbreviations follow those of Güterbock†, H.G. and Hoffner Jr., H.A. and van den Hout, Th.P.J. (eds.), *The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago (CHD)*. Chicago 1980- The fascicles are available online: <http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/pubs/catalog/chd/>

1 See below, part 2. Cf. CHD, 'Š': 114-115.

2 Cf. CHD, 'Š': 207.

3 Cf. CHD, 'L': 72-73.

and ‘fat’, he evinces a highly interesting selection of sources in which lard, tallow, butter, olive oil, cypress oil and sesame oil were used among the Hittites. Needless to say, the majority of these sources deal with ritual practices. The most common use of oil is in anointment. Kings, princes, worshippers, priests and sorceresses were anointed to perform rituals or to pass through particular physical conditions or social steps. Oil could also be used to anoint cultic objects, like (animal-shaped) vessels, to invoke protection from evil and insulate figurines, statues of deities, doors and windows during rituals. Moreover, oil was often used to attract and appease gods (see below part 3). Hoffner concludes his paper by opening new possibilities for further textual interpretations through his identification of the Hittite word for oil (see below, part 2). The hypothesis of the Hittite rendering *sākan* for Sumerian Ī (‘oil’, ‘fat’, etc. see below), predominantly attested in Hittite documents, had already been made by Hoffner himself in a previous study (Hoffner 1994) and was refined in the final word-entry of the CHD fascicle ‘Š’ (see below, part 2). Furthermore, Volkert Haas has collected the majority of ritual passages in which the different vegetal oils are used for various purposes in the chapter *Pflanzen und pflanzliche Materien* of his monumental work on *Materia Magica et Medica Hethitica* (Haas 2003: 257-266).

## 2. Words for ‘Oil’, ‘Fat’ and Similar Products (after Hoffner 1995)

As correctly stated by Hoffner (1995: 108): “Philologists dealing with a dead language are at the mercy of their documentation [...]. In the case of Hittite, they are also at the mercy of Sumerian terminology [...], philologists cannot be sure that the Hittites themselves used the same word or linguistically related words in their own language to designate types of oil, fat, or grease.”

The Sumerian logogram Ī(IĀ) should indicate either ‘oil’ or ‘fat’, products from a vegetable or animal source.<sup>5</sup> The Hittite word should be then the neuter *sākan/sakn-*.<sup>6</sup> The Luwian equivalent is *dāin-* (possible disyllabic reading /ta:yin/).<sup>7</sup>

Vegetable and animal oils and oil-bearing plants could also be indicated by compounding Sumerograms. <sup>UZU</sup>Ī (or UZU.Ī) indicates ‘animal fat’ (*i.e.* a substance more solid than liquid).<sup>8</sup> Sometimes UZU+Ī could denote simply ‘flesh’.<sup>9</sup> One of the Hittite related words might be <sup>UZU</sup>*appuzzi-*, meaning ‘tallow’, animal (especially sheep) fat (Ī.UDU),<sup>10</sup> to be distinguished from ‘swine fat’ (Ī.ŠAH). Another Hittite related word for the compound UZU.Ī could be <sup>UZU</sup>*kuzzaniyant-*.<sup>11</sup> Other types of ‘fat’ include Ī.NUN and Ī.NUN.NA, namely ‘butter’, ‘ghee’.

Ī.GIŠ, literally ‘tree oil’, should be a generic designation of a tree which is able to produce oil.<sup>12</sup> However, Hoffner (1995:108) suggested translating it ‘olive tree’, even though doubts had previously been cast on the matter.<sup>13</sup> <sup>GIŠ</sup>SE<sub>20</sub>-ER-DUM is the ‘olive tree’ indeed. Hence Ī <sup>GIŠ</sup>SE<sub>20</sub>-ER-DĪ denotes ‘olive oil’. The Hittite equivalent is unfortunately not known. As we have already seen (part 1), the botanical identity of (Sum.) <sup>GIŠ</sup>ŠE.GIŠ = ‘sesame’ is still debated; therefore nothing conclusive can be said, but ŠE.GIŠ.Ī may, accordingly, denote ‘sesame oil’. Despite the intriguing suggestion by Güterbock (1968: 71) to see the Hittite word *sapsama-* behind the logographic compound ŠE.GIŠ, the scarcity of syllabic attestations (just one entry; see CHD, ‘Š’:

5 For the readings Ī or IĀ of the sign 𒀭 see HZL: 126-127, Nr. 72.

6 Hoffner 1994. Cf. EDHIL: 698.

7 Cf. CLL: 201; StBoT 31: 239-242.

8 *Contra* StBoT 54: 646: UZU.Ī = Hitt. *suppaia-* ‘innards’.

9 See, for example, UZU.Ī.GU<sub>4</sub>: ‘beef’?

10 E.g. KUB 39.15, iv 1-2: [u]rkis=ttis=war=tta Ī[.UDU-it] *iskantis asan[du]*= “May your [p]ath b[e] smeared for you [with sheep] fat”. In line 7 *appuzzi-* is mentioned in a very broken context, instead. For the equivalence <sup>UZU</sup>Ī.UDU = *appuzzi-* see the attestations in HED, ‘A’: 103.

11 Cf. StBoT 27: 73, n. 45.

12 In Mesopotamian texts Ī.GIŠ is used also for non-vegetable oils. See CAD, ‘E’: 106 *s.v.* *ellu* B.

13 See, for instance, HZL: 127: 𒀭𒀭 ‘Sesam(öl), Fett’.

207) does not allow us any conclusion.<sup>14</sup> Analogously, we cannot precisely identify the <sup>GIŠ</sup>*samama-* (*sam(m)am(m)a*) attested in the Hittite documentation. It always appears in Hittite texts with the determinative for objects made out of wood (GIŠ).<sup>15</sup> Hence it should be a vegetable product (*i.e.* the fruit of a tree). It is also listed among fresh and dried fruit (<sup>GIŠ</sup>*INBU RABTU ŠABULU*).<sup>16</sup> On the account of this passage of KBo 10.34 (i 15-18), we can stay with Güterbock in proposing that the neuter noun <sup>GIŠ</sup>*samama-* indicates a kind of nut; maybe also its tree. The crucial passage is KUB 33.68, ii 8-10: <sup>GIŠ</sup>*samama mahhan d[uw]arnizzi nu parstehus arha pessiezzi*: “As he breaks the *samama*-nuts and throws away the shells...”. The dried shelled(?)<sup>17</sup> fruit could be a kind of nut, indeed. The hypothesis may also be confirmed by the following passage: *kāsa* <sup>GIŠ</sup>*samamma kitta [nu(?) ZI=KA(?) QĀTAMMA(?)] sakuwan ēstu*: “As the *samama*-nut is lying here, may [your(?) soul(?) likewise(?)] be protected!”.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the <sup>GIŠ</sup>*samama*-nut can produce oil: *kāsa* <sup>GIŠ</sup>*samama GIR-ri nu* <sup>GIŠ</sup>*[amama] [G]IM-an Ì-an ŠĀ-it har[zi]* DINGIR.[MAḪ-ass=a LUGAL MU]NUS. LUGAL KUR <sup>URU</sup>*Hatti=ya [QĀTAMMA ŠĀ-it assul]i har(a)k*: “The *samama*-nut is now lying here. As the *s[amama]* holds oil in (its) heart, [likewise] you, *Hanna[hanna]*, hol[d in good health the king, the queen and the land of *Hatti*!”.<sup>19</sup>

The Hittite term <sup>GIŠ</sup>*liti-/lēti-* was tentatively identified by Güterbock (1968: 61) as almond fruit despite the insufficient evidence for it. Nevertheless, it is a fruit that excretes oil. Just like the olive oil, it can be used as sedative<sup>20</sup> or anointment.<sup>21</sup> The almond (expressed with the Sumerogram <sup>GIŠ</sup>LAM.ḪAL) is attested only as a cathartic element in Hittite rituals of purification.<sup>22</sup>

The best oil is Ì.SAG DÜG.GA or simply Ì.DÜG.GA, literally ‘fine oil’.

### 3. Ì.DÜG.GA ‘fine oil’ (perfumed oil?) in ritual practices

In order to establish more precisely what ‘fine, good’ (DÜG.GA) ‘oil’ (Ì) means in Hittite contexts, it is worth consulting first the price of products listed in the Old Hittite Laws. One *zipattani* of Ì.DÜG.GA costs two shekels of silver,<sup>23</sup> while the same amount of swine fat (Ì.SAḪ) or ghee (Ì.NUN) costs one shekel.<sup>24</sup> Therefore Hoffner (1995: 110) stated: “This obviously establishes Ì.DÜG.GA as the most expensive of the oils”. We would not say it is so obvious. The remarkable value of the Ì.DÜG.GA is rather attested in the correspondence between sovereigns. In an Akkadian letter from *Hattusili* III to the Assyrian king (*Adad-nerari* I or *Salmanassar* I?), the Hittite ruler complains that the Assyrian monarch failed to send him the traditional coronation gifts, which include ceremonial luxury garments and fine oil for anointing: “Still, it is the custom that when kings assume kingship, the kings, his equals in rank, send him appropriate [pres]ents (on that occasion); clothing befitting kingship, and fine [oil] for anointing. But you did not do this today”.<sup>25</sup> The Ì.DÜG.GA was certainly used to anoint the king on the occasion of his

14 Cf. HEG, ‘Š’: 851.

15 To my knowledge there are no attestations of it without determinative, so far. But I had no chance to double check the CHD files.

16 KBo 10.34, i 15 ff.

17 For *parsteha-* see CHD, ‘P’: 190; HEG, ‘P’: 446.

18 KUB 17.10, ii 15-16. Here we cautiously follow the restoration proposed in CHD, ‘Š’: 114; the suggestion by Gurney *apud* Moore, Thesis 22, n. 13, in particular. It would mean that the analogy refers to the nut in its shell, but this infers some syntactical problems. See also CHD, ‘Š’: 53-54 for different interpretations.

19 KUB 17.13, 9’-12’.

20 *E.g.* KUB 33.74, i 8’-9’: “The *lēti* is lying h[ere] for you. May it re[liev]e your, of you God, [soul, hear]t and body”.

21 *E.g.* KUB 17.10, ii 22’-23’ (with duplicates): “The *lēti* is lying here. May it anoint [...] of Telipinu; [his] soul”.

22 Cf. Haas 2003: 290.

23 One *zipattani* is a measure of capacity difficult to determine. van den Hout (1990: 525) suggested an equivalence with BĀN (ca. 8,4 liters). Two shekels (GÍN) are ca. 25 gr.

24 KBo 6.26, ii 44-45. Cf. LH: 144-145.

25 KBo 1.14, obv. 6’-10’. Cf. Giorgieri and Mora 2004: 57-75 for the latest edition of the text and pages 57-60, for the identity of the Assyrian king.

enthronement and it was termed the ‘royal oil’ (Ì.DÜG.GA LUGAL-UT-TI).<sup>26</sup> This precious oil is even mentioned in a letter sent by the king of Cyprus (*Alašiya*) to the Egyptian pharaoh: “And behold, a *habannatu*-jar full of fine oil to be poured on your [he]ad I have sent, because you have sat on your royal throne”.<sup>27</sup> The future Hittite king *Tudhaliya* IV also complains in a letter with his queen-mother *Puduhepa* about the need of Ì.DÜG.GA: (KBo 18.2, obv. 1-6) “Thus speaks His Majesty: say to the queen(-mother), my lady, my dear mother, may the thousand gods keep my lady, my dear mother, in good health! Write (you plur.) to me how it is with my lady, my dear mother (KBo 18.2, rev. 4’-7’) ...bring (you plur.) it out and send (you plur.) it to me! At present I have no fine oil to anoint myself. Furthermore, write (you plur.) me letters so that I may know whether someone will send (it) to me or no one will send (it) to me”.<sup>28</sup> A simple ‘whim version’ is hard to sustain in this case, and the specific request of ‘fine oil’ by the heir to the throne may have political connotations.<sup>29</sup> This kind of sources, as many others, sheds light on the high value of Ì.DÜG.GA. Most importantly, however, they reveal a complex ideology of oil anointment and consumption in specific contexts that were common to the societies of the ancient Near East. The oil anointment ideology as a way to purify and elect in the same time the anointed person has a long tradition, widespread throughout the ancient Near East from the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC onwards.<sup>30</sup> Ioannis Fappas (2011) has recently illustrated this complex ‘oil ideology’ by presenting several sources from different Ancient Near Eastern contexts that clearly express it.

The present article does not pretend to (re-)investigate such a complex topic. We rather focus on the use of Ì.DÜG.GA in ritual contexts with particular emphasis on ‘fine oil’ consumption within ‘Hittite’ funerary scenarios.

The ‘fine oil’ is used in a recipe together with cedar oil, honey, and sesame to increase the cathartic properties of cleansing water.<sup>31</sup> An entry of a tablet catalogue states: “First tablet of the ‘fine oil’ (DUB.1.KAM ŠA Ì.DÜG.GA) by *Azzari*, the Hurrian physician: when a commander is going to lead the troops against an enemy city, she (the physician) pronounces a spell over it (*i.e.* the ‘fine oil’) and then anoints (*iskizzi*) the commander, his horses, together with his chariots and weapons”.<sup>32</sup> The anointment is here perceived to be a sort of preventive measure against possible risks. It has a pronounced apotropaic value, indeed. The anointment of animals’ body parts with ‘fine oil’ is a ritual practice attested in the myth called *Song of Ullikummi*, just when the god *Tēšob* sets up his battle cart to fight the monstrous *Ullikummi*, addressing his brother *Tašmišu* as follows: “Let them mix fodder. Let them [brin]g fine oil and an[o]int the horns of the bull *Šerišu*. Let them plate with go[ld] the tail of the bull *Tella* [...]. Let them put forward the wagons [...]. Now, when *Tašmišu* heard the words, he hurried and ha[st]ened. [He drove] the bull *Šerišu* [there] from the pasture. [He drove the bull *Tella* [there] from the Mount *Imgarra* [...]. He brought fine oil and [anointed the horns] of the bull *Šerišu* [...]”.<sup>33</sup>

This practice is clearly documented in sacrifice rituals. Goats and rams’ horns were anointed with ‘fine oil’ prior to their sacrifice.<sup>34</sup> The action of smearing animals with oil or fat is also described in the first tablet of the *Kikkuli* horse-training manual (*i.e.* in a non-ritual context): “Every day (UD-at UD-at) they [was]h (them) one time,<sup>35</sup> and one makes (them) shrug (*i.e.* shaking themselves

26 See, for instance, the substitution ritual probably performed just before the actual enthronement of the king or in the event of a bad omen (StBoT 3: 10-11).

27 EA 34, 50-53.

28 For the latest treatment of this letter see Hoffner 2009: 327-329.

29 However, this form of complaining about the lack of oil as ointment is a formula well attested in the ancient Mesopotamian documentation. See, for instance, the attestations in CAD ‘Š/1’: 325, d.

30 See the important work by Kutsch (1963).

31 ChS I/1 Nr. 1: 33-34.

32 KUB 30.42, obv. 18-14.

33 CTH 345: *Excerpta* §§ 38-39, *passim*. Cf. Hoffner 1990: 61.

34 See, for instance, KBo 11.32, obv. 22-24; KBo 14.21, i 28-31.

35 It implies that they regularly and constantly (day by day) wash out impurity from the horses’ hair. Rubbing/



dry) (*katkattinu*), while they (*i.e.* the horses) keep [eati]ng [thei]r [forage] and hay day by day, as well. But on the fifth day they anoint (*iskanzi*) (them) with abundant (*sic.* such as straw) oil fat (Ì.NUN).<sup>36</sup> The ‘fine oil’ could also be used to wipe (*vel* clean = *sart-/sartai-/sartiya-*)<sup>37</sup> body parts, persons or objects: “When the patient washes himself, the Old Woman (<sup>MUNUS</sup>ŠU.GI) says: «I washed myself with water on the road. Wash yourself with rain-water then! I stepped on a flint, but in the house [...] And I have wiped (*Ìsar<sup>1</sup>-ti-ia-nu-Ìun<sup>1</sup>*) the fine oil <on the roof> of the palace»”.<sup>38</sup> ‘Fine oil’ could also be sprinkled upon, before or toward persons or objects during rituals:<sup>39</sup> “The *patili*-priest then takes a small vessel (<sup>DUG</sup>*kappi-*) and sprinkles (*papparsz[ì]*) (it) three times toward the god Šarruma (*i.e.* toward his statue); then he turns around (*sic.* he turns his eyes back) and [sprinkles?] it [to]ward the gods of the *sinapsi*-structure”.<sup>40</sup> Oils are often used in rituals to attract or appease angry gods. Gods are thus attracted or ‘lured’ by special paths (*palsa-/Sum. KASKAL*) sprinkled with oils and perfumes: *kāsa IŠTU Ì.DÜG.GA ŠA<sup>d</sup> Telipinu KASKAL. HÌ.A=KA paparsun nu=ssan<sup>d</sup> Telipinus Ì.DÜG.GA-it papparsanta KASKAL-sa iyanni*: “I have herewith sprinkled your paths with fine oil, O god *Telipinu*. So walk, god *Telipinu*, on the path sprinkled with fine oil!”.<sup>41</sup> Gods are hence ‘called’ or ‘summoned’ by the fragrance and the good smell of the ‘fine oil’: “As this fine oi[l] is [sce]nted, and it is well-liked by the gods and humans, let the king, the queen and the land of *Hatti* be well-liked by the gods in the same way”.<sup>42</sup>

It is important to stress that the physical property of the fragrance (*i.e.* to be perfumed, scented, smelling good = *sanezz-*) is not specific to the ‘fine’ oil, as at least testified by the following passage of ‘*Mursili’s* Invocation’ to the god *Telipinu*: “Now let the fragrant aroma (*lit.* ‘odor’) (*sanezzis warsulas*), (namely) the cedar and the oil (Ì-*anza*) summon you (*kallisdu*). Come back to your shrine! I am herewith invoking you (by means of offering) bread and libation. So be pacified and let your ear be turned to what I am saying to you, O god, and listen to it!”.<sup>43</sup>

#### 4. Oil consumption in funerary scenarios: the case of the ‘fine oil’ in the Hittite ‘*sallis wastais*’

Even if death is an inevitable event for all, it was not the same for everyone. The status of the deceased was self-manifested by the treatment of the corpse. The information that we can obtain from the Hittite epigraphic sources is provided by a large number of documents (several fragments divided in series),<sup>44</sup> all recent copies (13<sup>th</sup> century BC) of older texts,<sup>45</sup> generally referred to as ‘funeral rites’. The typological distinction of this category of texts, called ‘rituals for the deceased’ (*akkantas saklaes*), was proposed by Hittitologists on the basis of the tablets’ colophons. As already pointed out by scholars of Hittite, the colophons’ formula *sallis wastais* (‘great sin/loss’ [for the land of Hatti]), specifically indicates the death of the Hittite king or his family members. Thus it can be translated as ‘Royal funeral’. The character of this category of documents is highly prescriptive. It means that we deal with a traditional protocol of the Hittite royal funerary ritual. Hence, it cannot be considered as a mere description of a death ritual once carried out for a specific Hittite

scrubbing process? Note the iterative aspect of the verb: *ar(r)-(i)-sk-anzi*.

36 KUB 1.13+, iii 5-9. Cf. Kammenhuber 1961: 62-65.

37 Cf. CHD, ‘Š’: 290-291.

38 ChS I/5 Nr. 19: 138-139.

39 KBo 17.69, 12-14. Cf. ChS I/9 Nr. 32: 75.

40 Probably a sort of vestibule/*pronaos* of a temple (that can have wooden parts). For further information, generally refer to CHD, ‘Š’: 378.

41 KBo 17.10, ii 28-30.

42 KUB 15.34, ii 29-30.

43 KUB 24.1+, i 11-17. Cf. Singer 2002: 54. Lastly, Kassian and Yakubovich 2007: 428, 432.

44 HPM (<http://www.hethport.uni-wuerzburg.de/hetkonk/>) lists more than a hundred of entries under CTH 450. For the division of the series, see Kapetúš 2008: 454.

45 For the discussion on the dating of the original composition see Kassian *et al.* 2002: 12-14. Recently, again Kapetúš 2008: 450: “Apparently, none of the analysed texts is older than the New Hittite period”.

king.<sup>46</sup> This complex 14-day funerary ritual lists all sorts of objects that have to be carefully used on a certain day and at a certain time. Sifting through the synopsis of these ritual events,<sup>47</sup> we can evince indications of the oil consumption they demanded. Apparently, the rite of separation starts on the second day. After having made a wooden statue of the deceased,<sup>48</sup> a lip-cover of gold is placed over the lips of the deceased and eye-covers of gold over his/her eyes.<sup>49</sup> Then the main meal is announced for the participants in the ritual. Libations are then made while singers sing accompanying themselves on musical instruments. Next the partakers in the ritual bid the dead 'farewell' for the first time: they kiss him/her. At this stage the typical symbols of gender (bow and arrow in case the king has died; spindle and distaff for the queen) are displayed in the hands of the deceased. Precious garments are also given. While the body is laying in the house (*É-ri*; maybe in the royal palace) or next to it,<sup>50</sup> some rituals are performed by the Old Woman in order to force the soul to separate from the body. Apparently some objects belonging to the deceased are destroyed and fire is lighted on (in an 'empty space?').<sup>51</sup> After various appeals to the deceased and invocations, some ritual objects are treated; the 'fine oil' is mentioned only in very fragmentary contexts. Presumably a silver *huppar*(-bowl?)<sup>52</sup> is filled (*sūwanza*) with 'fine oil'; something is laid in it (*n=as=kan anda ANA Ì.DÙG.GA kitari*)<sup>53</sup> and then some procedures are carried out on the corpse,<sup>54</sup> hypothetically involving family members as well, if the term 'relative' (*hassana*-(*ssi*-)) could be completely restored in the allegedly related text KUB 39.46, 7'.<sup>55</sup> Finally the corpse is temporarily laid to 'rest' in the house, presumably waiting for the mourners to come for wailing.<sup>56</sup> A further reference to the 'fine oil' can be found in a likewise fragmentary passage of a reconstructed two-column tablet, (its fragments were unearthed in the building A of Büyükkale complex in *Hattusa*), collated by Cem Karasu in Ankara and presented by Kapetúš (2011: 452, with note 13; Fig. a-b on pages 455-456).<sup>57</sup> In light of the collation, both the events of the first and the second day of the *sallis wastais* seem conveyed in one tablet. Given the state of preservation of these fragments and since the two-column series of building




46 Cf. van den Hout 1994, pages 56-70 in particular.

47 For which see Kassian *et al.* 2002: 22-40. The classification of the 60 tablets and fragments edited by the Russian scholars and presumably all belonging to the *sallis wastais* has been questioned. Since this issue overpasses the aim of this brief investigation, we cautiously follow the aforementioned classification as far as possible. The re-organization of the *corpus* initiated by Kapelusz (2008) is only partly taken into account in the present article because it reflects a very provisional stage, as the Polish scholar herself admitted (Kapelusz 2008: 453).

48 See in particular van den Hout 1995.

49 Cf. Kassian *et al.* 2002: 23. *Contra* van den Hout 1995: 200–201, who suggests that the symbols of gender and these mask-shaped objects are put on the statue of the deceased.

50 Maybe in the gate-house. Cf. KUB 39.48, 6'-7'.

51 Kassian *et al.* (2002: 138-139) translate KUB 39.48, 8' as follows: "They b[urn] the empty fire" ([*a*]n-da sa-an-na-pi-li pa-ab-hu-ur wa-a[r-nu-an-zī]). The sentence is somewhat meaningless. Furthermore there are no attestations of any 'empty fire' so far. Cf. CHD, 'P' s.v. *pabbur*. In this context the adjective *sannapili-* has to be used as a noun (emptiness, empty space, void). Cf. CHD, 'Š': 161 f. Hence, the following translation seems more convincing: "They [light] on fire in an empty space (dat. sing.); possibly in the gate-house. However, judging from the photo and the handcopy (, it is problematic to read the preceding line (7'): n-at=kan parā<sup>E</sup> hilamni IZI[...] as Tischler does (HEG, 'Š/1': 813). The two last signs before the erasure should be [pi] () and [e] (). Cf. Kassian *et al.* 2002: 138. Anyway, see the analogous expression in an oracular context (KBo 14.21, ii 73): "[...] took fire and (it is put) into the void [...]": IZI ME-as nu=kan anda sannad<sup>i</sup>pi<sup>i</sup>l[i...]. It must be stressed that the related passage is very fragmentary. Therefore, the suggestions made here are only tentative. For the latest treatment of this fragment (and its join) within the *sallis wastais* texts corpus see Kapelus 2011: 151-152.

52 The *huppar*-bowl/keg is a general pot suitable to be heaped with liquids (usually beer, wine or oil). It can also be made of precious metals, like silver. In the Hittite Royal Funerary Ritual it always lacks of determinative DUG. It might be etymologically related to *hūppa*- ('heap'); hence to *huppaē*-<sup>zi</sup> ('to heap', 'to pile up'), but this is very speculative. See the attestations in HED, 'H': 387 ff.

53 It is not clear what is really lying in the ‘fine oil’, since the subject of the sentence is a common gender noun (see the enclitic personal pronoun nom. sing. *-as-*). van den Hout (1995: 209) translates: “he/it lies in fine oil”.

54 KBo 25.184, iii 68'-74'.

55 According to CHD (Š: 181) it is a duplicate of KBo 25.184, ii 57 ff. Nonetheless, it is worth to note the find-spots: KBo 25.184: Temple I, Storeroom 45; KUB 39.46: L/18, House on the Slope, West corner, in the 'Makridi-pit'.

56 KUB 30.18+, iv 9'-11'.

57 Cf. the online edition in the HPM: M. Kapełus (ed.), [hethiter.net/](http://hethiter.net/): CTH 450.1.1.1 (TRen 17.08.2011).

A could have been copied from one-column originals, it is difficult to reconstruct the events that encompass the use of fine oil. For what can be reconstructed so far, oil consumption in connection with treatment of the corpse cannot be excluded.

The events presented in KUB 30.15+ are the most intriguing of the entire *sallis wastais* for several reasons.<sup>58</sup> The reconstructed one-column tablet should present the events of the third day of the funerary ritual. According to the Russian scholars who joined the fragments together, the notation at the very beginning of the main fragment (UD 2<sup>KAM</sup> = second day) is a very banal scribal error. This solution was chosen because: “if we suppose that KUB 30.15+ with the duplicates belongs to the description of the actions of the second day serious difficulties arise in the reconstruction of the chronology of the actions, performed in this day”.<sup>59</sup> Nonetheless, the same notation is found in the so-called ‘Reduced Description’ of this day (KBo 39.289). In this case too, the editors advocated an ‘uncritical copy’ by the scribe.<sup>60</sup> At any rate a clear and comprehensive description of the cremation of the body does not exist within the *sallis wastais* textual corpus.<sup>61</sup> In fact, the alleged third day’s description starts with post-cremation procedures. The bones are retrieved from the pyre by women. The pyre is extinguished with the help of wine, beer and other liquids. They take the bones with silver tongs,<sup>62</sup> and they put them into a silver *huppar*-bowl of twenty *minae* and a half of weight, filled with fine oil (Ī.DÜG.DA *suwan*). Then they take them out of the fine oil and lay them down on *kazzarnul*-linen and a fine cloth (TÜG.SIG) is laid under that linen.<sup>63</sup> When they have finished gathering the bones, they wrap them in the fine cloth together with the linen (*QADU GADA*); presumably to finish absorbing the oil. Thereupon they place them on the throne;<sup>64</sup> but if it is a woman (*i.e.* if the queen has died), they put them on a bench(?).<sup>65</sup> After having set a meal for those who helped to gather the bones, the statue of the deceased is located in the centre of the extinguished pyre and decorated according to the gender of the dead. From then on the rituals’ sequence involving the soul of the deceased begins, represented by the wooden statue that will partake in meals and rites. Meanwhile they pour fine oil on the cremation spot with the residual ashes of the dead (*i.e.* ‘the body natural’, to be distinguished from the ‘body politic’ of the king or queen).<sup>66</sup> Subsequently they gather the bones and bring them out of the cremation spot. They carry them into his or her ‘stone-house’ (É.NA<sub>4</sub>).<sup>67</sup> They spread a bed inside the inner chamber of the ‘stone-house’. Then they take the bones from the throne and put them onto the spread bed. On that moment they set a lamp of [x] shekels (filled) with fine oil before the bones.<sup>68</sup> As already pointed out by Hoffner (1995: 110), if one of the properties of the ‘fine oil’ is

58 See the *joinskizze* by Kassian *et al.* 2002: 257-259.

59 Kassian *et al.* 2002: 257.

60 Kassian *et al.* 2002: 257, note 3.

61 Some very broken fragments might refer to the cremation of the body, but they cannot be used as sources. Cf. KUB 39.29, iv 8’-9’. It is reductive to postulate a scribal error on the basis of other alleged scribal errors in different tablets of the *sallis wastais*, as Kassian *et al.* (2002: 282) apparently do. The issue seems more complicated. But see the different interpretations by van den Hout (1995: 196) and Kapelusz (2008: 450-451).

62 As stated by Kassian *et al.* (2002: 283), the poorly attested word (URUDU) *lappa-* can be interpreted ‘tongs’ (as those for the fireplace) in light of the omen KUB 8.35, obv. 4-5: *apās=kan DUMU-as ĪD-az [hu-w]a’-an-ta-za IZI-za lappaza iyattari*: ‘The child will escape from river, storm(?) (*lit.* wind?), fire and tongs (or tongs for fire?)’. See also the observations by Beckman in StBoT 29: 17. For different interpretations (‘scoop’, ‘shovel’), see HED, ‘L’: 60.

63 It is difficult to reconcile the analysis of <sup>GADA</sup>*kazzarnul* by Rössle *apud* Kassian *et al.* 2002: 284: *kazzarnul* < *karzanul* < *karza(n)+ul* in light of the quite convincing hypothesis by Melchert (1999): *karza(n)* = basket (of wool). Moreover the metathesis development is not completely persuasive. More convincing is Rieken’s hypothesis (StBoT 44: 467) from a semantic point of view, but phonetically debatable. The matter is too extensive to be treated here. The author of the present article hopes that the results of his Marie Curie research project on the textile terminology of Hittite Anatolia (TEXTHA) will soon be available: <http://ctr.hum.ku.dk/economy/texttha/>

64 For <sup>GIS</sup>ŠÜ.A.AN<sup>1</sup>(or -an?) see Kassian *et al.* 2002: 284-285.

65 KUB 30.15+, obv. 1-9.

66 KUB 30.15+, obv. 42-43.

67 For the possible identification of this structure with a real tomb (*i.e.* the ultimate resting place), see, above all, van den Hout 2002.

68 KUB 30.15+, obv. 46-50. According to their attestations (CHD, ‘Š’: 304-305) lamps (<sup>DUG</sup>*sas(ann)a-*) could be



to be perfumed, then its fragrance might have been considered appropriate, as would incense, in a funerary setting. Indeed, there are many other Hittite contexts in which different kinds of oil were burned to produce pleasant odors.<sup>69</sup>

On the seventh day they give hand-water to the seated statue and “drip ‘fine oil’ inside” (*n=asta* Ì.DÙG.GA *anda zapnuwa[nzi]*).<sup>70</sup> The expression is quite puzzling. Probably they blend oil with water, actually trickling fine oil in it, if the sentence particle *-asta* marks here the passage from one spatial domain into another domain.<sup>71</sup> In the same day the rite of the ‘burning (of) the straw’ takes place as clearly indicated in the colophon: 1 IM.GÍD.DA *ezzan warnuma*ṣṣ: “One large tablet (*i.e.* a one column tablet) of the burning (of) the straw”.<sup>72</sup> The statue of the deceased is brought out of his house while they (literally) burn the straw (*ezzan*) inside the gate-house (<sup>E</sup>*hi*[*lamni*] *anda*) together with one set of precious garments and one pot of ‘fine oil’. Given the context, it is reasonable to suppose that this kind of procedures should be accounted for within the rite of separation: the soul of the dead is lead out of his/her house and the deceased’s possessions are burnt. If so, the straw has to be interpreted here as an idiomatic expression for the (material) goods (of the deceased).<sup>73</sup> Hence, the main function of the fine oil is to purify these objects.

The rite of separation between the soul of the dead and the ‘world’ that belonged to him/her (in this case his/her possessions) continues in the following days. On the twelfth day the ritual performers hold forth (*parā appanzi*) one set of precious garments (to?) the deceased (*akkan*ṣṣ) (and) one vessel of baked clay (with) fine oil. Then they put the garments in the fireplace and pour the fine oil on it.<sup>74</sup> The following day, after the main meal, they pour fine oil from above onto the wine.<sup>75</sup> Then the statue of the deceased is given to drink.

According to the reconstruction of the events provided by the Russian editors of the ‘comprehensive’ *sallis wastais* ritual, during the night between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> day (maybe the conclusive) the ritual performers stay awake. It is indeed one of the crucial moments of the rite of passage: liminality. The soul is disoriented. It is no longer belonging to the world of the living, but has not yet begun the transition to the world of the dead. It stands at the threshold.

Just after the ritual libation, in order to persuade the soul to leave and go to the underworld, the next ritual is performed: a ritual performer smears (*iskizzi*) a rope (*sum(m)anza(n)-*) with fine oil and throws it into the fireplace. At that moment the mourners appeal to the deceased: “When you will go into the meadow (Ú.SAL-*wa*),<sup>76</sup> do not pull the rope!”.<sup>77</sup> If the soul is not appeased, it could not reach the land of the dead; hence it would wander dangerously in the land of the living. This is the main reason why the rope which leads the soul of the deceased into the realm of the

loaded both with oil and ghee.

69 See the list of passages in Hoffner 1995: 112.

70 Here again the problem of the enumeration of the days is presented. In the main fragment [144/m] (KUB 39.4, obv. 1) the Russian scholars read UD L 8 Ṣ<sup>KAM</sup> (without collation!) and propose to emend Ṣ<sup>7</sup>, in line with the reconstruction of the events on the basis of the enumeration by days (Kassian *et al.* 2002: 334). It must be stressed that looking at the signs in the autography of Otten (𐎶𐎵𐎶) the number ‘8’ seems more clearly recognizable than the sign in the photo of the original in the HPM: <http://tinyurl.com/lu6xuay>.

There is no room in the present article to open a discussion on the value of the signs at the bottom of the colophons as markers for the enumeration of the tablets. Cf. Kassian *et al.* 2002: 282, note 1; van den Hout 1995: 196, with note 9. For this kind of problems we await the official publication of W. Waal *The source as object. Studies in Hittite diplomatics* (PhD. thesis defended at Leiden University, 14 September 2010).

71 Cf. GrHL: 383, § 28.114.

72 KUB 30.25+, rev. 29.

73 Cf. HED, ‘A-E’: 321-322, *s.v.* *ezzan*, *izzan*.

74 KUB 30.19 (+) 30.22, i 51-54. We may suppose that these garments belonged to the king or queen, since they are ‘festive/precious garments’ (Ṣ<sup>TUG</sup>Ṣ<sup>NÍG</sup>.LÁM<sup>MES</sup>). If so, they are presented (shown!) to the deceased before being burnt.

75 Note the strange construction: [*nu=ssan namma* Ḡ<sup>IS</sup>*gapanu*]*was* (not dat.-loc.!) *ser* Ì.DÙG.GA *lahūwanzi*.

76 On the eighth day the ritual of the ‘piece of turf’ is performed. It is cut off and presented to the Sungod in order to prevent anybody to take it away from the deceased. It actually represents the meadow where oxen, sheep, horses and mules graze for the deceased. Cf. Kassian *et al.* 2002: 383-385.

77 KUB 30.19+, iv 10-14.

dead has to be smeared with 'fine oil'.

As we have seen in this part, the 'fine oil' is an essential ritual element from the very beginning of the funerary ritual until its conclusion. The ways in which the oil acts in this sequence of micro-rituals are multiple: the oil is used both to protect the carnal remains of the deceased, to purify the ritual objects, to appease the gods and the soul of the deceased and finally to lead the soul itself to find its way in the new realm, not being anguished in leaving the realm of the living.

## 5. Concluding Remarks

As already pointed out in Part 2, the oil terminology in Hittite documentation partly reflects the use of logograms in Mesopotamian texts. This implies that the Sumerograms used by the Hittites to designate oil products could not bear the same semantic connotation they have in older (or even contemporary) Mesopotamian texts.

Moreover, the ritual formulas in the passages given as example in Part 3 have to be interpreted as belonging to an old literary tradition. In fact, we can find the same expressions related to the particular use of oils in many Mesopotamian texts.<sup>78</sup>

As a result of this brief investigation on the use of 'fine oil' in Hittite funerary ritual(s), we cannot assume that (fine) oil was used only because of some specific properties (*e.g.* for its fragrance).

A deeper analysis of similar texts belonging to different *milieux* (Babylonia, Assyria, Ugarit, etc.) is not conducted here due to the scope of the present article and the substantial number of sources that would have to be carefully checked.

Even so, we conclude this study by presenting two case-studies. The first illustrates how the epigraphic sources must be carefully analyzed starting from their contexts. On the other hand, the second is meant to be a suggestive indication of possible comparative studies, so often neglected, of oil consumption in funerary rituals.

In his interesting work entitled *Exchange of Ideas in the Eastern Mediterranean during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries BC: the case of perfumed oil use and ideology*, Ioannis Fappas briefly illustrates the practice of the last anointment performed during funerary rituals. In so doing, he reports two passages from two distinct texts.<sup>79</sup> The first passage belongs to the *sallis wastais* and pertains the treatment with fine oil of the bones of the deceased king or queen (for this passage, see above, Part 4). The latter is a very important text coming from Ugarit and labelled '(Juste) Souffrant' by its first editor.<sup>80</sup> RS 25.460 is a very peculiar text written in Akkadian that was discovered within the library of an incantation priest at Ugarit (modern Ras Shamra, Syria). On the basis of linguistic analysis, some scholars have suggested that it may have been originally composed during the Old Babylonian or early Cassite periods (1800-1500 BC). This means that the 13<sup>th</sup> century tablet might be a copy of a text that is two to five hundred years older.<sup>81</sup> The text is a combination of a hymn and incantation addressed to the god Marduk by an unnamed sufferer. In this composition the sufferer describes the 'evil' and illness that continue to assail him. No one is able to diagnose the cause of his illness. The sufferer calls to praise Marduk and his deeds in order to be recovered. The final part (stanza C, lines 34-41) describes Marduk's responsibility for his illness, while underlining the involvement of the deity in the process of healing: "The one who struck me down has had mercy on me. He threw me down and girded me. He broke me and tore me loose. He scattered me and collected me together. He poured me out and gathered me up. From the mouth of death he snatched me. From the underworld he brought me up". The text finishes with the solemn declaration that Marduk is the only one able to heal the sufferer. It is therefore clear that this text

78 See the list of attestations in CAD, 'Š/1': 321-330 *s.v.* *šamnu*.

79 Fappas 2011: 502.

80 Nougayrol 1968: 265-273.

81 Cf. Nougayrol 1968: 266-267; von Soden 1969.

has nothing to do with any funerary ritual practice. For its contents and for the literary structure the text has, for obvious reasons, been compared by biblical scholars to the Book of Job.<sup>82</sup> Some years ago Aaron Chalmers found interesting parallels between certain structures and language of RS 25.460 (especially lines 34-44) and other texts from the Hebrew Bible that he characterized as ‘early Hebrew Poetry’.<sup>83</sup> We have no competence to judge such a characterization. What is highly debatable is, however, the conclusion he drew. He abruptly moved from an interesting observation of a linguistic parallel to a theological point.<sup>84</sup> Anyhow, these studies have, to a large extent, demonstrated the remote origin and fortune of this very particular composition. What is interesting for us is that in a moving passage the sufferer states: “My closest relatives preach me to accept my condition. My family is there to comfort me. My brothers bathe in their blood, such if it is their own misery. My women pour perfumed oil on my corpse, already prepared for the tomb”.<sup>85</sup> The insertion of the final anointment is extremely illustrative of the diffusion of such a motif in the ancient Near Eastern literature. It actually marks the border between what can be considered ritual practice and literary formulas of a collective tradition.

The second case we want to bring to the readers’ attention is the description of the funerary of Patroclus as described in Homeric poetry.<sup>86</sup>

Before starting to analyze the relevant passages it is worth underlining that:

The Homeric representation of funerary practices probably traces its origin back to a large poetic tradition; It does not present any real, concrete, or even prescriptive funerary ritual performance, as the *sallis wastais* may well do;

As far as we know, it does not reflect any funerary practices performed at the time of the canonical redaction of the ‘Homeric’ epic poetry (perhaps around 700 BC).<sup>87</sup>

The archaeological evidence of the Late Bronze Age Greek mainland and islands (hence, ‘Mycenaean’) has demonstrated that the most consistent funerary practice is inhumation.<sup>88</sup>

As already stressed by Ian Rutherford, who recently worked on this subject, a number of Hittitologists have attempted to study the two funerary rituals (Patroclus’ and the *sallis wastais*) in a comparative perspective.<sup>89</sup> In line with the general criticism (*e.g.* Testart 2005), Rutherford analyzes different passages of Book XXIII of the Iliad and concludes: “Certainly, the two performances share a few key details related to the cremation and the disposal of the bones...I suspect a large number of similar funerary performances are attested in a wide range of societies”.<sup>90</sup> The last assertion is completely true. One just needs to consult the fundamental study of van Gennep *Les rites de Passage* to find a universe of parallel funerary practices, apparently distant in time and space from those we are dealing with; here just one of many: “Among rites of separation, some of which have already been reviewed, it is appropriate to conclude: the various procedures by which the corpse is transported outside; burning tools; the house; the jewels; the deceased’s possession; putting to death the deceased’s wives, slaves, or favorite animals; washings, anointings, and rites of purification in general; and taboos of all sorts”.<sup>91</sup>

The funeral of Patroclus consists of different moments in time; it begins with the driving of chariots

82 See, among others, Gray 1970.

83 Chalmers 2004.

84 Chalmers 2004: 9.

85 RS.25.460, 9-12.

86 Iliad, Book XXIII.

87 To the contrary: from an archaeological point of view, the only feature that (Proto-)Geometric funerary custom shares with the Late Bronze Age *sallis wastais* is the cremation of the body, at least in some areas. Unfortunately we have not had the opportunity to carefully consult the primary sources. So, we trustfully follow Rutherford’s considerations (2007: 227, with note 18). It means that further studies on this are highly desirable.

88 Once again, we report more than secondary sources. Cf. Rutherford 2007: 227.

89 Rutherford 2007: 229, with note 34.

90 Rutherford 2007: 229-230. Rutherford (2007: 231) also sketches a table in which the different moments of the two funerary rituals are compared. Nonetheless, several parallel ritual performances can be added to that table.

91 van Gennep 1975: 164.

around the corpse (Iliad XXIII, 12-13) and a feast with ritual sacrifices (XXIII, 24-34). The next morning the Myrmidons transport the body to the pyre covering the body with their hair (XXIII, 123-151). At the sunset, they build the pyre, put the corpse on top of it and sacrifice sheep and cattle (XXIII, 162-167). “And from them all (*i.e.* the sacrificed animals), the great-souled Achilles gathered the fat, and enfolded the dead therein from head to foot, and about him heaped the flayed bodies. And thereon he set two-handled jars of honey and oil, leaning them against the beer; and four horses with high arched necks he cast swiftly upon the pyre, groaning aloud the while” (XXIII, 168-171). During the night he pours libations of wine and invokes the spirit of Patroclus (XXIII, 184-225). When the new day dawns: “the son of Peleus withdrew apart from the burning pyre, and laid him down sore-wearied; and sweet sleep leapt upon him. But they that were with the son of Atreus gathered in a throng, and the noise and din of their oncoming aroused him; and he sat upright and spoke to them saying: «Son of Atreus, and ye other princes of the hosts of Achaea, first quench ye with flaming wine the burning pyre, even all whereon the might of the fire has come, and thereafter let us gather the bones of Patroclus, Menoetius’ son, singling them out well from the rest»; and easy they are to discern, for he lay in the midst of the pyre, while the others burned apart on the edges thereof, horses and men mingled together. «Then let us place the bones in a golden urn wrapped in a double layer of fat (καὶ τὰ μὲν ἐν χρυσῇ φιάλῃ καὶ δίπλακι δημῶ θείομεν) until such time as I myself be hidden in Hades»” (XXIII, 231-244).

We believe that approaching these texts in a comparative perspective with merely sterile criticism is simply too reductive.

The analogies between the fine oil consumption in the *sallis wastais* and the ritual use of oil and fat (δημός) in the funeral of Patroclus need further considerations in a concrete interdisciplinary perspective. Hence, we hope that in the future the discipline of archaeology will help us in bridging the information we can deduce from the study of the epigraphic sources. It does not really take a Jungian ‘Archetype’ to do so: “It is very dangerous, it is risky, that everything is politics, everything is ideology. There are cultural actions, there is religion, it is more complicated I think than to just state that material culture is ideology or burial practices are politics, because that means that we don’t care about texts, that we don’t care about a lot of stuff, also about memory”.<sup>92</sup>

*šamnam iptasāšma awīli īwe*

*“He anointed himself with fine oil and became a civilized being”*

*Gilgameš epic, Pennsylvania Tablet, OB II 108*

92 Citing Laneri’s remarks (Laneri 2007: 315) in the ‘Conclusive Discussion’ of the Symposium on social analyses of funerary traditions held at the Oriental Institute, 17-18 February 2006.

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